

#505 - October 29, 1976

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## NEW JCAN STAFFER

Long-awaited, Merceditas "Cherie" Cruz from the Philippines has arrived to work with JCAN. She is here under the joint sponsorship of the NCC Philippines/NCC Japan. Arranged by WCC in cooperation with CCA, this ecumenical sharing of personnel makes it possible for her to work as English correspondence secretary to John Nakajima and as subscription manager for JCAN. Through the NCC Division of Missions, US Churches are participating financially to support her stay in Japan.

Ms. Cruz was born in Manila and studied English Literature at Maryknoll College in Quezon City. Before coming to JCAN, she worked as editorial assistant for *Impact*, a magazine of in-depth articles on social action in Asia read by students, teachers and social action workers.

In 1975 Cherie went to Hong Kong for a conference of Christian Communicators (see JCAN #478, July 4, 1975). The following JCAN questions--and Cherie's answers--grew out of that conference:

*What sort of role should Christian communicators take in Asia - especially the English language communicators?*

Today, some Christian communicators are getting down to the grassroots level, and this is a very good indicator of change in attitudes. However, there still is a lot of confusion about our role. Here we are, somewhere in Asia with our little magazine or newsletter, speaking in English. And there they are, the masses, steeped in problems and suffering, and many of them cannot even read or write.

We say we communicate to the middlemen, the "leaders." But we need to have broader and more horizontal relationships. So we ask once more, what is Christian communication in Asia? Isn't it basically a need for people to talk to each other so that they may move in unison towards Christian goals? It's a matter of seeing things clearly. When things are clear, and moving in one direction, there is communication.

*What problems do Christian communicators in Asia face?*

Here we are in Asia. We are Christians to bring the good news about the king-

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**CORRECTION:** In our last issue (Oct. 15, 1976) Suzanne Benton's performance of "Sarah and Hagar" was held October 10 (not October 12) and was attended by approximately 100 persons rather than 30 as stated.

**EDITORS:**

Subscriptions: JAPAN ¥2,700; OVERSEAS Seamail \$10.00 Airmail Asia \$11.00 other \$12.00

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dom, that ideal situation where the condition of life is that which man dreams and strives for. This is the big dream. And here we are, with a great gap between the dream and reality. That gap is our main problem, and that's why it is very important to see where we have come from, where we are, and where we are going.

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HIROSHIMA AND HOT DOGS  
*Atom Bomb Reenactment*

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The Japanese people have reacted with shock and disappointment to the recent news that Americans view reenactment of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima as a form of entertainment.

Over 40,000 people paid up to \$5 each to watch the "historic event" restaged in Harlington, Texas October 9 and 10. The atomic bomb show, staged to raise money for a group that preserves World War II aircraft, came complete with a B-29 bomber flown by the original pilot, Paul Tibbets. There was even a semi-mushroom shaped cloud. The difference was that the real bomb left nearly 130,000 people dead, missing or injured.

The fact that Americans could view this spectacle in an atmosphere of marching bands and hot dogs shows that, "Americans are not really sensitive to the feelings of the Japanese people," John Nakajima of the NCCJ said. "The citizens of each country must be sensitive to other peoples. After all, how would the Americans feel if one of the pilots who attacked Pearl Harbor reenacted that event in Japan?"

The second point raised by Nakajima was morality. "Despite the fact that atomic weapons are immoral, there is no international legislation prohibiting their use." However, YAMAGUCHI Akiko, secretary of the NCCJ Women's Committee, adds, "The proliferation of atomic weapons is mostly the fault of the Japanese. Since we suffered the atomic disaster, it is our job to protest effectively the development of nuclear weapons."

Japan has very few physical reminders of the war. But even though over half of the present Japanese population was born after World War II, of these young people 70% of the males and 80% of the females feel that the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki will never be forgotten. Japanese describe themselves as having an "atomic allergy," and the idea of using this horrible event in history as a fund-raiser is absolutely inconceivable.

"Never Understand" Mrs. YAMAGUCHI Yasuko, a teacher in a church-related kindergarten, reacted with total amazement to the news of the Texas event. Still a young student the day the bomb exploded over Hiroshima, she will never forget the sudden light and the sight of a three-story concrete building as it crumbled over the students inside going for chapel. Yamaguchi says she will never understand the thinking of those in Texas who sponsored the show, and is puzzled at how the Americans could have possibly put the past away so quickly. "I know Americans have a great deal of curiosity about new things. It is difficult for me to accept the fact that the bombing was reenacted only to satisfy American curiosity and to raise funds. I would like to know why it was really done."

Mr. MATSUOKA Nobuo, leader of a citizen's movement against atomic energy plants says, "I will never be able to hold my head up and face the people of the Philippines, China, Korea and other Asian countries where the Japanese military



ruled. My heart is filled with apologies for these people. Several thousand people were killed instantly by the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and many are still suffering in their sickbeds. The vivid memory of that hell will stay with the people who lost their loved ones. I strongly believe that the atomic bombs should never have been used or even produced. The Texas show was an insult to those who died during the bombings, but more important is the harm done to the survivors and the families of those who lost their loved ones."

Official protests were lodged with the American Embassy by the Mayor of Hiroshima and groups opposed to atomic and hydrogen bombs. ARAKI Takeshi, Hiroshima mayor, said in a letter to the embassy that to treat the dropping of an atom bomb as a show trampled on the "spirit of Hiroshima," calling the reenactment "a blasphemy" against the many people still suffering from the aftereffects of the blast.

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CHRISTIANS STUDY TENRIKYO

*NCC Study Center Seminar at the Tenrikyo Headquarters*

by Notto R. THELLE

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"Okaeri nasai!" "Welcome home!"

These familiar words greet the visitor to the headquarters of Tenrikyo, one of the most influential of Japan's New Religions (a group of religions founded, for the most part, within the last century). For the Tenrikyo believer, it is a visit to the original home of mankind.

The great shrine and the adjacent shrines are all built around what is thought to be the center of the world and of the creation of mankind--the place where "God the Parent" revealed his/her message to the farmer woman NAKAYAMA Miki more than a hundred years ago, and where the world of "joyous life" will be realized when the heavenly dew pours down on the day of fulfillment.

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JCAN APPEALS FOR GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS

Presently, only nine JCAN subscriptions go to Asia. Several Asian institutions and individuals have expressed the desire to receive JCAN, including "Bina Warga" Lay Centre in Indonesia and the Ecumenical Christian Center of India. But due to lack of funds, they are unable to subscribe. Thus we turn to our readers to give in the true Christian way this Christmas season by making JCAN available to these foreign countries. Through this expansion of our readership, JCAN will achieve a greater impact in Asia as an intermediary in Christian communication. Enclosed is a special order blank for the 1976 season. Send checks or furikae within Japan (with a note designating it as a gift) to the JCAN subscription office and we will arrange for a gift subscription in your name. How about a JCAN subscription for a friend in your own country too?

NOTE: We'll have only one issue in November; JCAN editor Lee Seaman has had to return home suddenly and will be out of Japan for that month. Meanwhile, we'll all keep on trucking here--there will be an extra issue in January to try to bridge the communication gap.

--Eds.



When 50 pastors and lay Christians gathered at the headquarters Sept. 6-8 to attend the annual seminar arranged by the NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions, they were both challenged and inspired to encounter a religion which has a missionary spirit and strength of its unique calling.

The visitors witnessed the morning service with its chanting and hand movements to sweep away the evil dust. They toured the hospital, which combines medical care and spiritual healing, and admired the library with its unique collection of 16th and 17th century Christian literature and modern theology and missiology. Participants also visited the center's social institutions, graveyards, historical buildings and museums.

Becoming Even though Tenrikyo is usually called a new religion, visitors  
Established received a strong impression that it is in the process of becoming established. The original charismatic spirit is fading, to be replaced by a centralized and well-organized administration. It now has to deal with the problem of inherited faith among second- and third-generation believers. But despite these changes, the religion remains deeply rooted in Japanese soil. What impressed the participants most was not so much the beautiful buildings, institutions, and activities, but rather a feeling of "earthliness." In contrast to Japanese Christianity, which seems to be rather pale and intellectual, Tenrikyo has somehow kept its consciousness of being a peasant's faith.

Thus the seminar was not only a study of another religion, but was also a strong reminder Japanese Christianity in its intellectual sophistication sometimes seems to forget that it was started by a carpenter and developed by fishermen and farmers.

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#### A VISIT TO THE CHURCHES IN EAST GERMANY

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by AMEMIYA Eiichi

*East Germany no longer has an officially supported State Church. The church lives on individual contributions, a minority organization within the German community. In this way it shows many similarities to the Japanese church. Although the social structures and political systems differ widely, the position of Christians within the two countries is in many ways similar. Both live confronted by a great many challenges, and in this sense share a common ground. AMEMIYA Eiichi, a pastor of the Japanese Kyodan, recently visited churches in the German Democratic Republic. Here we offer his report of that trip.*

--Eds.

When I was planning my visit to East Germany (GDR), John NAKAJIMA, general secretary of the NCCJ, asked me to make initial contacts with the *Bund der Evangelischen Kirchen* for possible establishment of official relations between churches in Japan and in the GDR. The Bund (Federation of Evangelical Churches in the GDR) was founded in 1969 by five United Evangelical Churches and three Lutheran Churches. Seven of the Landeskirchen (state churches) of the GDR had withdrawn from the Evangelical Churches in Germany (the EKD, which incorporated both East and West Germany) to form their own Bund. The NCCJ had until then maintained formal relations with East German churches through the EKD, but since the split no formal relations have existed with the Bund. However, some Japanese pastors who had studied in Germany kept in touch with the United Evangelical Churches (EKU) privately, and this helped establish fellowship between the two churches.

During my August trip I had the privilege of meeting Bishop Albrecht SCHÖNHERR,

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chairperson of the Bund. In addition I was able to exchange opinions on mutual fellowship in the future at an EKV Executive Committee meeting. The group expressed a wish to establish official relationships with Japanese churches. In response, the NCCJ is now considering setting up a special committee in the near future.

The Strain of      The GDR church now feels the strain of having to give up  
Lost Privileges      privileges it long enjoyed as a state church. At the same  
time, however, Christians there are trying their utmost to  
discover their unique mission under socialism.

In the cities of East Germany I could not but feel moved, meeting pastors and laity who, at a time of great difficulty, keep on bearing the burden of mission. During my stay Pastor Oskar BRUSEWITZ burned himself to death in protest to the government, giving me some insight as to the kind of difficulties that the church there faces.

The GDR church is neither in despair nor in uncontested compromise with the government. They are indeed in search of their own road. It may be a narrow one, but I am confident that it will surely be a blessed one.

I am also confident that at the dawn of cooperative relationships between the NCCJ and the Bund we will find much that we can and must learn from each other.

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*New Christian Publication*  
A MAGAZINE FOR ALL SEASONS

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The Lutheran publishing company *Seibunsha*, an organization emphasizing the publication of Luther's theology for the Japanese people, has come out with a new 252-page quarterly magazine called *Kikan Sozo* (Seasonal Creation). The publication will spotlight Protestant and Catholic writers of the post-WW II era, a period marked by the emergence of large numbers of popular mass-circulation publications aimed at the general reading public.

Writers in the Christian tradition are often deeply concerned about whether their literary works fall within the limits of recognized theology, the well-known author ENDO Shusaku comments in the first issue of the magazine. In this context, *Kikan Sozo* is meant to provide a meeting-place. Writers with Christian convictions can express their religious experiences freely, and readers can react to and appreciate this unique world of literature which explores the hidden meanings and dimensions of life. As indigenous Christianity becomes a more urgent concern in Japanese culture, these writers will be able to present valuable and adventurous approaches to the Christian message for a wider audience.

Opening      The first issue of the magazine illuminates the leading Catholic  
the Shutter      writer OGAWA Kunio. Five literary critics react to his work, en-  
couraging the reader to appreciate the novels on several different  
levels. After reading his outstanding book *Aru Seisho* (A Certain Bible), I felt  
that Ogawa, an impressionist artist, creates the atmosphere of a picture image  
with a sense of changing form and color. It is as if he opens the camera shutter  
wide in order to respond to the dark and gloomy world.

The magazine's dynamic dialogue between writers seeks for a meeting-point between the controversial subjects of literature and faith. One section introduces new essays and book reviews. As a theological contribution, a study on "The Letter to the Romans" by Kitamori was added.

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Christians who spent their youth as victims of World War II live as historical witness to that reality, and their experience has contributed to a modern literary trend which *Kikan Sozo* makes current. However, the post-war writers are also treated as having a meaningful place in their own right, beyond the war experience, in the historical development of literature.

The literary critic SAITO Yasumasa says that in the continued process of asking the real meanings of literature, this magazine comes into a world of literary chaos. He likens it to a Noah's Ark sailing toward the horizon and seeking out the real meaning of civilization and cultural creation. I am anxious to receive the coming winter issue in which the world of ARIYOSHI Sawako, writer on women's issues, will be explored, and the spring issue which will take up the literature of ENDO Shusaku. I am sure these writings will bring a new breath of fresh air to present literary understanding.

--Aiko CARTER

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CLIPPINGS FROM THE JAPANESE PRESS

compiled by C. KORIYAMA

"SILVER SEAT" ON COMMUTER TRAINS -- Recently major private commuter trains have followed the lead of the Japan National Railroad, introducing "Silver Seat" areas for elderly and physically-handicapped passengers. Although the seats are not reserved exclusively for them, those with physical problems are supposed to have priority.

However, things don't seem to be going quite as planned, according to a recent report in the *Asahi Shimbun* (News). Some people don't know where to find the seats, standing old folks are ignored by young people sitting in the Silver Seats, and in other parts of the train people who might once have given up their seats often now take the attitude, "There's a Silver Seat for you... over there somewhere."

Neither the handicapped nor the aged, of course, carry any papers or certification. The whole Silver Seat program depends entirely on the cooperation of the other passengers. Perhaps the person who thought up the scheme should have designated all seats as Silver Seats, or passed out "Certificates of Infirmary" to older or handicapped passengers. As it is, we have another typical "so-so" scene from Japanese society.

WHAT TO DO IN QUAKES --- Using the members of an English conversation class, a library in Azabu, Tokyo has created an English recording telling what to do in case of a major earthquake. Library officials believe the tape was needed because there are some 8,000 foreigners living in the ward as well as 62 embassies and consul-generals.

The tape is based on a manual prepared by the Minato Ward Office with the translating done by class members, who include wage earners, housewives and students. From the original tape, which lasts 15 minutes, 16 duplicates were created.

Hachiro Yamazaki, the head librarian of the Minato Ward library, hopes the new attempt will move officials of the Metropolitan and national governments to provide more anti-disaster measures for foreigners.

--Asahi Shimbun

The fall issue of the Japan Christian Quarterly focuses on Christian art in Japan. Reproductions of works with messages of faith and Christian symbolism combined with vivid articles by Kenneth Heim, Shigeo Ishii, Aiko Carter and others make this in-depth study well worth reading. Copies available for ¥1,000 through the publisher Kyo Bun Kwan, 4-5-1 Ginza, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104-or FURIKAE Kyo Bun Kwan JCQ, Tokyo 11357.

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